

KAWADA! MISAWA! AKIRA TAUE! AKIYAMA! All Japan Carnival 95 and that's about all I've seen so far this week.

Howdy!

Welcome to DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #12!

This will be pretty much all about All Japan Carnival 95 since I got it Monday and I had birthing classes on Tuesday and I watched all of it Wednesday and tonight, so it was a psychology overload so if it gets disjointed, please forgive me.:)

- The best match was Taue vs Kawada (God! One sentence in and I can feel the flames incoming.) I liked it the most because of the sheer brutality of it. Kawada working stiff as flying hell was balanced by Taue continuously taking Kawada out to the floor and beating the hell out of him. Taue is such a physically awkward guy that I overlooked how well he works a match, which is really weird because he moves it along at such a snails pace, but somehow he makes it work. I guess his size makes the slower pace palatable because it adds weight to his moves, and makes them seem more effective (sort of the Keichi Takano effect) For this whole tournament, his matches were all good, but I guess it helps when your weakest opponent is Jun Akiyama, so we weren't treated to a Dan Spivey/Akira Taue match, that would shattered the illusion of Akira for me. The other weird thing was that I noticed that the more I see Taue, the less I like Kobashi. Kenta comes off as such a weinie sometimes- especially in the six man match in volume one. I think what I like about Taue on this tape is that he is all psychology and stoicism. His only real highspot is that chokeslam on the floor and the occassional midgrade powerbomb, but he's so methodical and absolutely no bullshit in his approach that I have to love him. Put that into the ring with the manic intensity of Kawada and it's really hard for me to lose. Kawada looks cool hitting such a big target, and it makes his suplexes look that much more impressive.

- The Misawa/Kawada match ruled the fucking world. I guess that was as close to a win for Kawada as he was going to get because by the end he is beating the crap out of our man Mitsuhara. I was pissed he didn't get the win, actually at the end. I guess the part where they stop the match in the beginning was one of those All Japan Shoot Angles and it worked- I was confused.:) There were so many cool parts to this match I will attempt to hit on a couple of things. I love the reverse to reverse to reverse of the suplex setup and then Kawada falls on his head so he can kick Misawa before he lands. Kawada sold the Tiger Driver on the floor pretty well at first because he looked like he was out of it but I was thinking about how cool it would ave been to have sold it all the way through the match. The ending was great because, unlike the Taue/Misawa match, at the end there looked like there was going to be a certain-Misawa opponent victory and when the bell rings you can feel the air come out of the room. The best Misawa move was the Chicken wing suplex directly on Kawada's head to hold off Kawada's first flurry of pinfall attempts. The great psychological ploy was that by the second flurry, when Kawada was just beating the shit out of Misawa, you knew that if the bell didn't ring, another such stop-gap suplex wasn't forthcoming and Kawada gets the win. This wasn't the case in the

Taue/Misawa draw because neither man had established dominance and, though it was entertaining as all get-out, one is left with the feeling that they were just spinning their wheels.

- Jun Akiyama had a great match against Taue, which I wasn't banking on and had a lacklustre match against both Kawada and Misawa. Both had cool moments, especially when Akiyama turned on the suplex machine, but the endings were such a sign of Big Four Dominance that the submissions left a bad taste in this man's mouth. Misawa used the obscure lucha Indian Deathlock with a front face lock as the submission finisher. The fact that it was clumsily applied added up to quite an anticlimax to a match that had its moments. At least he fared better than Omori against Kawada, where Kawada beat him to death and basically does the one finger pin. I was expecting Kawada to yell at the ref for not giving him the five count. I'm not sure where this tournament was in the development of Akiyama, but he wrestled circles around Kobashi, match for match, and though they have similar styles, Akiyama has left out all the really stupid types of things that irritate me about Kobashi. Those little karate chops and the rolling thing on the ground (especially to BABA!) really make me wince, and when Kawada sells the chops, I laugh out loud and feel sorry for Kawada at the same time. It's like when Malenko had to sell the Jim Powers kneelift, he'll do it but you know he feels goofy for selling it. Akiyama is definitely on track to be the next great badass in wrestling. Hell! Give him Kobashi's non-Triple Crown spot and give him some wins.

- The Americans were treated about as well as the Japanese at Starcade. Danny Spivey spent more time in the bathroom on the plane to Japan than on the mat. He was beaten in less than seven minutes in both matches he was in that I saw, and I'm guessing his non-functioning hip had something to do with it. Kroffat vs Furnas was a zany batch of fun, with Danny getting bent out of shape about Doug exposing the Kroffat hinder to the shocked and amazed Carnival crowd. I REALLY hope that they use their neck-breaking suplexes that were exhibited in this match on either of the Goddwinns. To see the deterioration of Hansen watch his and Misawa's respective matches against Doug Furnas. Misawa makes it nifty, Hansen makes it a the only TRULY suckass match on the tape.

- The first volume had a neat six man tag with Taue, Baba and Kawada vs Hansen, Kobashi and Misawa. My favorite part was when Hansen makes the save, he pulls Taue off Kobashi, drags him out of the ring and just starts stomping him into oblivion. Why people don't try saves like that more often is beyond me. Baba looks mummified and it was great to see the best workers in the world having to sell his punches and clotheslines. there was some subtext between Baba and Kobashi that made Kobashi look like a big baby for having the need to whup up on a very old man.

- Nitro had some cool things on it. The best was Rey Misterio vs the man formerly known as the Gigilo. Jimmy has found his freakin working boots when he can hang with Rey and he did pretty well for himself. Push him already. Juventud was on. I was happy. He jobbed. I was unhappy. He jobbed to Regal. I was okay with it. I'm glad it looks like they are moving towards Malenko/Psicosis, as I would think it would have a lot of promise, and I hope we see a decent Psicosis/Juventud match out of all this.

NANIWA~!

- Dean Rasmussen, Juventudiac!